ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS POLICY

Students with and without disabilities are expected to attend all course-related activities. The attendance policy for each course is outlined on the course syllabus. Absences, for any reason, do not relieve the student from responsibility for completing the essential requirements of a course.

Attendance "flexibility" may sometimes be appropriate for students with health-related disabilities that occur episodically. Flexibility does not mean that attendance policies do not apply. Rather, it requires the instructor to consider the function of attendance for a particular class and to make a reasoned decision for the requirement. In a seminar class, lab, class where group projects are completed, or in field experiences, attendance often becomes an essential function of the class and absences may interfere with the student’s (and classmates’) educational experience. How attendance impacts a student’s grade is at the discretion of the professor.

The faculty member and student should discuss the attendance requirements at the start of the semester and may wish to outline in writing the parameters of any modification to ensure clarity of the plan.

The U.S. Department of Education recommends that the following facts be considered in determining whether attendance is an essential requirement of a course and thus not open to accommodation:

- Is there classroom interaction between the instructor and students, and among students?
- Do student contributions in class constitute a significant component of the learning process?
- Does the fundamental nature of the course rely on student participation as an essential method of learning?
- To what degree does a student’s failure to attend constitute a significant loss to the educational experience of other students in the class?
- What does the course description and syllabus say regarding attendance?
- What method is used to calculate the final grade?
- What are the classroom practices and policies regarding attendance?

In the final analysis, the instructor needs to determine how much attendance flexibility can be allowed without altering the essential requirements of the course. The determination of what is ‘reasonable’ at any point in time depends on the impact of the student’s disability and the essential nature of class attendance. If students cannot meet the attendance requirements with or without a reasonable accommodation, withdrawal from the course may be the only option to avoid academic penalty. Students are responsible for knowing the withdrawal deadlines posted on the academic calendar.